

# Seven Connections in Seven Ways



It's often expressed in marketing and sales that it takes seven connections in seven ways to build relationships; however, it is difficult to think of seven different ways to approach someone. This tool outlines seven ways that you can interact with decision-makers every year to sell your product - public health. More information on building relationships with legislative and other policy-makers is included in the Executive Summary of this toolkit.

**1. Introduce Yourself.** Relationships are important. When a policy-maker knows you are available as a resource, they are more likely to reach out when they have questions. During your initial meeting, explain the role of public health and why it is important to consider when making health decisions.

**2. Discuss the State of the Health of Iowa Report.** We have developed a report outlining some of the top issues in the state and why public health has been and will continue to be an important part of addressing those health needs. This can be used as a discussion piece. *(under construction)*

**3. Present a Legislative Package.** There are a number of Iowa-based public health organizations that publish policy statements each year. This includes the Iowa Public Health Association, the Iowa Counties Public Health Association, the Iowa Department of Public Health and the Iowa Environmental Health Association. Use these as a reference to create your own priorities on both a state and local level.

**4. Present Community Health Needs Assessment (CHNA) Data.** One way to mobilize the data found through the CHNA process is through policy action. Use state aggregate data found at [idph.iowa.gov](http://idph.iowa.gov) in conjunction with your own reports to tell a story about what is happening in your community.

**5. Specific Session Issue.** Stay engaged with what is happening during Session and remain available as a resource if the policy-maker is in need of data or information on a specific topic. You can help them understand the impact that legislation may have on your agency or the health of Iowans.

**6. Specific Interim Issue.** Reaching out to policy-makers in the Interim is a good idea because they may have more time to learn from you. It also establishes you as an expert on the topic, so they can come to you if they have questions during session.

**7. Thank you.** Policy-makers work hard and spend time away from their homes and families for four to five months per year to serve the public. Make sure that you take the time once a year to write a handwritten note to your policy-makers so they know they are appreciated.